

WINCHESTER TOWN FORUM

10 June 2015

ST MAURICE'S COVERT ENVIRONMENTAL ENHANCEMENT UPDATE

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

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RECENT REFERENCES:

WTF 200 - St Maurice's Covert Update – 22 January 2014

WTF 193 – St Maurice's Covert and Other Town Centre Enhancements – 11 September 2013

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

This report updates the Forum on progress with this project.

The Forum is also asked to agree that the St Maurice's Covert Informal Group be convened to consider the draft brief and strategy for pursuing the enhancement project.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the Winchester Town Forum:

1. Notes the progress made to date and the Informal Group considers the project brief and strategy to take the project forwards and reports back to the Forum.

## WINCHESTER TOWN FORUM

10 June 2015

### ST MAURICE'S COVERT UPDATE

#### REPORT OF HEAD OF HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

1. Progress so far
- 1.1 Members may recall that it was agreed that in order to create some capacity within the Historic Environment team, a sum of £45,000 for two years be put towards the creation of a part-time temporary post so that work could be progressed on the various elements of Town Centre Enhancement desired by the Forum which included preparation of a project to enhance St Maurice's Covert.
- 1.2 A new member of staff was recruited in January 2014 and after a settling in period this helped other team members to pursue a number of discrete areas of work including the preparation of a local listing policy, new and revised local plan heritage and Winchester specific policies, (which are now progressing through the consultation process) and pursuance of some particularly difficult maintenance projects for The Pentice and continued preparation for the Buttercross in particular. Only the Buttercross project has not progressed on site due to lack of funding. It also meant that work could be undertaken to develop a brief for the enhancement of St Maurice's Covert.
- 1.3 Unfortunately however, the member of staff has now left the Council to take up a permanent full time role in another authority. This means that the capacity created has now disappeared and the workload of the team is such that other work areas have to take priority over the St Maurice's Covert project.
- 1.4 The remainder of the funds allocated to the staffing of the team remain but it is considered unlikely that we would be able to attract a member of staff of the right calibre to take up a part time temporary post for the remainder of the year (approximately 10 months). It is possible that a conservation specialist may be interested in undertaking specific work but this is subject to this type of engagement meeting the stringent employment process now required. This is being investigated.
- 1.5 In the meantime, progress is likely to be slow but the next step would be for the new St Maurice's Covert Informal Group to consider the brief and to agree the next step forward. A strategy for taking the project forward would also need to be drawn up and agreed but this is subject to capacity within the team to produce it.

## OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:

### 2. COMMUNITY STRATEGY AND PORTFOLIO PLANS (RELEVANCE TO):

- 2.1 The proposal to enhance St Maurice's Covert as part of an overall strategy of improvements in the City Retail Centre accords with two of the outcomes of the sustainable Community Strategy. These are High Quality Environment – *Protect and improve our landscapes and townscapes* and Active Communities – *Maintain current low levels of crime, seeking to understand better why and where there is a fear of crime and what we can do to prevent it.*

### 3. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 The Town Forum originally approved a project budget for St Maurice's Covert of £40,000 spread over four years from 2013/14 to 2016/17. To date there has been no expenditure and a budget carry forward request of £20,000 will be put forward to carry over the unspent budget in 2014/15, in order to maintain the original £40,000 budget allocation.
- 3.2 The Employee budget remaining, from the original budget of £45,000 referred to in 1.1 above, is currently £17,164 in 2015/16. A budget carry forward request of £3,436 relating to the unspent budget in 2014/15 will be put forward, which would create a total budget remaining of £20,600 in 2015/16.
- 3.3 Progress on the project will depend on appropriate new staff being engaged to resource the team using the savings from the previously agreed allocation for this purpose.

### 4. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

- 4.1 None.

### 5. APPENDICES

None